

Closed Mouths, Not Closed Minds: Incorporating Religion into University Life

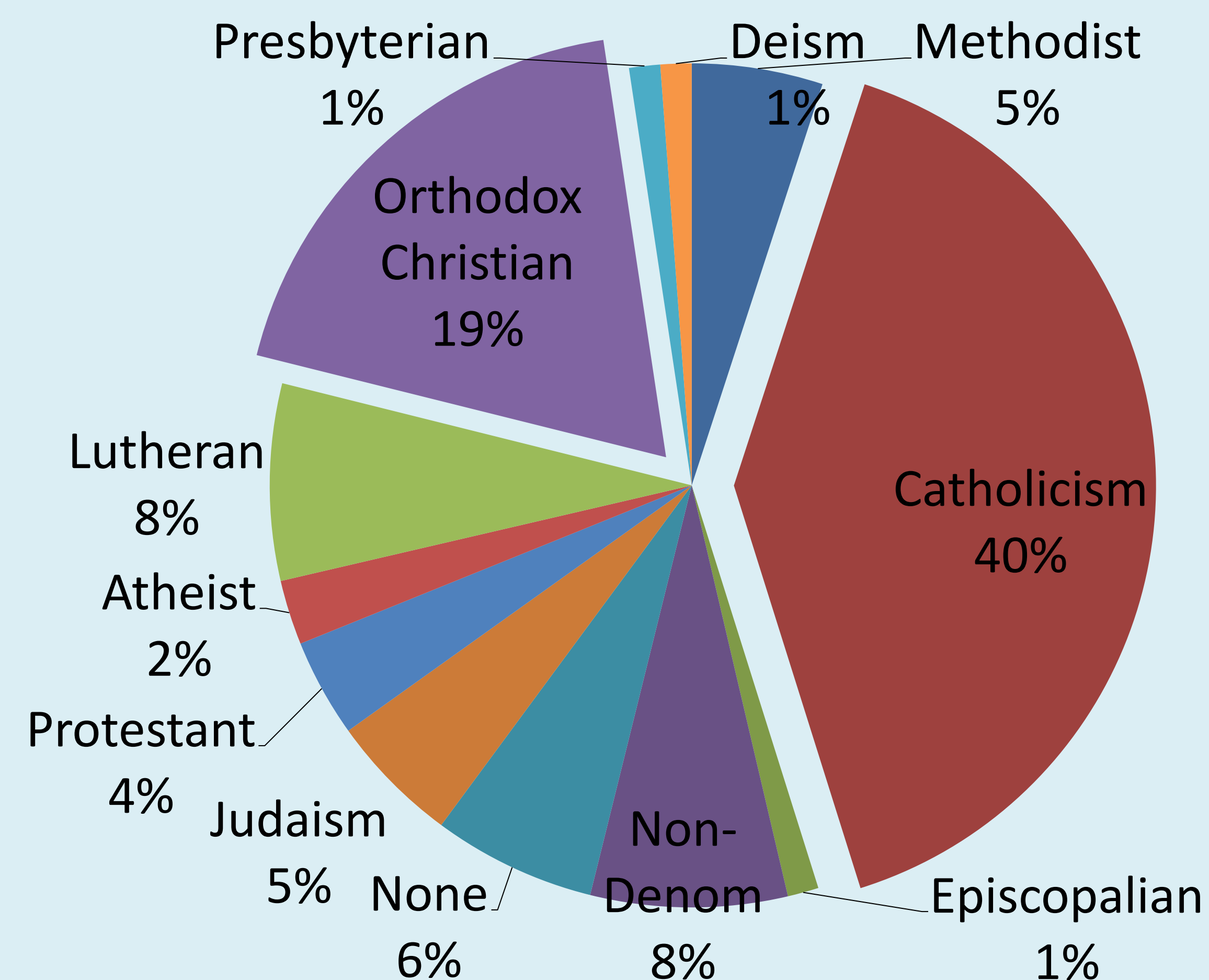
Research Questions

- What are the positive and negative effects of students being “religious” on a college campus? How does their lifestyle affect their campus life?
- To what extent are religious opinions considered/tolerated in the classroom? How do students and professors discuss these issues within the framework of a course?
- How many religious organizations in different denominations of the Christian faith are active on campus? How do these organizations project themselves to students?

Methods

- Anonymous Survey of 79 U of I students
- 2 Interviews with students involved in religious organizations
- 4 interviews with students not involved in religious organizations
- 1 interview with a professor

Survey of Religions on U of I Campus



Relevant Quotes from Interviews

- “I haven’t encountered a lot of groups, they are kind of quiet and I do not hear much about them. I don’t think that many people do know much about them.”
Freshman at U of I
- “The people make this organization a place where I feel at home, loved, accepted and am able to grow. It’s not just a group of people I see every so often who work for a common cause, rather these are the people that are going to be apart of my life after I graduate college.”
Junior at U of I on what makes her organization unique
- “My goal is to support my students' diverse practices...Honestly, I feel that since I teach at a public university, it's best to maintain a secular posture in the classroom.” Professor of English at the U of I



<http://ondeadline.wordpress.com/2009/11/23/the-evolution-of-religion-what-is-faith-to-you/>

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Discussion

- People do not have enough information about religious groups on campus to join them
- Past interactions with religious organizations affect current participation
- Radical preaching deters students from joining religious organizations
- Students and professors alike are worried about offending others with religious beliefs

Recommendations

- Create a safe environment in the classroom to encourage diverse opinions
- Provide more positive information about religious organizations on campus

Where do you mostly talk about your own religion in discussion?

